

12

PEOPLES OF THE LAKE NYASA REGION

621 every adult member is a matrilineal descendant of a single ancestress, or a spouse of
 619 one of these people. All husbands are called *alumu* by the male members of the descent
 [601] group, but husbands call each other by the kinship terms for older and younger
 brother (i.e. *acimweni* or *mpwenge*) according to the seniority of their wives. Similarly
 undifferentiated in kinship terms are the wives of all men of the descent group, who
 call each other 'sister'.

591 The husband is expected to work in his wife's garden, to help his mother-in-law,
 606 and also, in the early stages of marriage, to avoid her. His attitude to his father-in-law
 is one of respect, relaxing as time goes on. His attitude to his wife's brother is also one
 of respect, which covers feelings of latent hostility. Although husband and wife's
 brother co-operate in affairs relating to the woman and her children (e.g. they jointly
 consult the diviner in case of illness, and the brother-in-law hears grievances the
 husband may have against his wife), there are elements of conflict arising from their
 competition for the affection of the woman and her children.

591 Patrilocal marriages are the rule in certain cases. The village headman commonly
 622 has his wife in his own village. At his death his widow may return to her own village,
 603 but if her daughters have married locally she may stay, and one of her sons, as warden
 621 of his sisters, will also stay and marry patrilocally, as did his father, the headman.
 Thus a new matrilineal descent group, linked to that of the headman by a patrilineal
 link, develops. In every generation the number of separate but related matrilineal
 descent groups would double, and at such a rate of proliferation it might be expected
 that any village would contain many family groups. In fact, however, most members
 of a village can trace their descent from a common ancestress removed not more than
 about five generations. There are two reasons for this degree of homogeneity in the
 kin-grouping in the villages. One is that the villages tend to split up as they become
 too large and complex. The other is that the introduction of a new matrilineal descent
 [582] group is often avoided by a cross-cousin marriage by the headman of the village or the
 warden of a sorority group.

605 There is a joking-relationship between cross-cousins, that is, for example, between
 582 the village headman's children and his sisters' children. The latter, as members of his
 descent group, have interests and loyalties opposed to those of his own children.
 Although there is a strong tradition of cross-cousin marriage, such marriages are said
 to be likely to be unstable.

BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE

584 Child betrothal was common among the Yao. Acceptance of a loin-cloth and the
 wearing of it was token of betrothal, giving the groom exclusive rights over the girl.¹
 The negotiations for an adult marriage are conducted by senior matrilineal kinmen
 of the parties, who at the subsequent ceremony act as witnesses or sureties to the
 marriage. Usually the senior is the mother's brother, and the junior the brother. The
 585 act of validation, the *Cingowu* rite, takes place some time after the husband and wife
 have been living together. They meet in the hut of the woman for the rite, which
 consists in eating two pots of porridge, prepared by the female relatives of each party.
 The man's people bring a cockerel and the woman's a hen for relish. The exchange of
 food symbolizes the exchange of members of each matrilineal kin group, which is

¹ Macdonald, 1882, vol. 4, p. 128; Johnston, 1897, pp. 411-13.

622 *amlesi* is used for bamboo and once an informant when pressed
 643 told me a tale of a group of people who in dire starvation ate
 614 bamboo leaves and were thenceforth called after the bamboo.

This story, however, was discredited by others and I pass it off as unimportant. There is, however, some evidence that the words *apiri amlesi*, *ambeue* and so on, are commonly used in Nyanja, and possibly amongst the Lakeside Tonga who were once part of the Marawi peoples, for objects other than clan-names.

614 Informants say that people with the same clan-name could not
 562 marry in the past,¹ so that the clan appears to have had the characteristics of an exogamous descent group. The position to-day is vastly different. Not only do people take the clan-names of their fathers, but many young people do not even know their clan-names at all.

614 At this point I should make it clear that the modern confusion
 611 about clan-names is no doubt partly due to the emphasis placed
 567 on patrilineal descent by the purveyors of White culture, the Administrators and the Missionaries, and also by the same emphasis in Islamic tradition which has influenced most Yao groups. Another factor in the situation is that slave descent still markedly affects social relationships in modern Nyasaland. Its significance here is that when a man took a slave-wife in the old days, his children by her took his clan-name, and not hers. Patrilineal descent of the clan-name therefore tends to point to the slave origin of a person. People who are able to point to a freeman ancestry are proud of this fact and are proud to be able to claim a clan-name associated with a long line of matrilineal ancestors, particularly if there were some well-known men among them. On the other hand, I found it a fairly safe indication that, if I could find no information about an ancestress, particularly her clan-name, then I was dealing with a group descended from a slave. A third factor is that some people explained their lack of knowledge of a clan-name by the state of social unrest and confusion at the end of the last century. As a result of the incursions of the Ngoni, Nguru and slave-raiding Yao and Arab groups, and finally the punitive expeditions of the British and the Portuguese, villages were destroyed and groups annihilated. People lost contact with their relatives, even

¹ Confirmed by Hyde, R. S., 'Marriage and relationship among the Yao', *Nyasaland News*, vii (1893), 217-18.

593 brother, is called *ayme mbumba*, or 'the warden of the sorority-group'. As one would expect among a matrilineal people, the link between a man and his mother and sisters is strong. But it is the link with his sister that is strongest. She relies on him for protection, particularly when she becomes ill, but also in her relationships with her husband. Her brother will be her junior marriage surety, and he will give the consent which will allow a man to marry her. Also a woman's brother will have to consult the diviner and find the medicines when she or her children sicken. In times of distress, as, for example, if her crops have failed, she will appeal to her brother for help. Similarly the man is dependent on his sister in a number of subtle ways. He can always rely on her for hospitality, and is able to get a meal from her if he needs it. But his dependence on his sisters for prestige is much more important. The significance of this will emerge when we see the *mbumba* organization in the light of the segmentation and fission of the lineage. A man can only found a new village if he has the full support of his sisters. A sister also plays a most important rôle at the birth of his children. She represents him both at the first foetal-quickening ceremony and at the birth of his child, when she listens to the birth-pang confessions of his wife.¹

[582] At the same time the relations of sister and brother are restricted by custom. A man must never appear too familiar with his sister, especially in sexual matters. He may not, for example, sleep in the same hut as she does; if she is away and he sleeps in her empty hut he must not make his bed in the place where she usually sleeps. He may not even sit on her sleeping mat. [583] Authentic cases of incest with a sister are extremely rare, whereas I recorded three or four cases of father-daughter incest while I was in the field. Supposed cases of brother-sister incest are recounted and discussed widely. This is understandable because a man who is suspiciously familiar with his sister is suspected of being a sorcerer, since it is widely believed that a sorcerer usually obtains the power that he needs for the performance of his dire deeds by sleeping with his sister. The riddle of the initiands—'What is the sweetest fruit which may not be tasted?' Answer, 'Your sister'—neatly reflects the attitude of the Yao.

The close link of brother and sister is also reflected in the

¹ The significance of this is explained in Chap. VII, p. 185.

The Lineage Framework of Villages

149

It is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of the sorority-group in everyday life. There is hardly a social situation in which the relationships of a man to his dependent female matrilineal kin are not involved. Probably marriage is the most frequent context in which his duties to and responsibilities for his sorority-group emerge. When a man wishes to marry a woman, he must get the consent of her brother. Ideally, it is a woman's brother who gives the consent, and if one asks a Yao how he gets married to any particular woman he will answer immediately, 'You go to ask her brother.' When consent has been obtained the woman's brother seeks out the man's brother and formally meets him, thereby setting the public seal on the relationships between the man and the woman. This gives the husband particular rights over his wife and her activities. After this, the difficulties of any of the marriage partners are the concern of the two sponsoring relatives (*acinamangosue*) whom I have called 'marriage sureties'. They meet to discuss the illnesses of either of the marriage partners or their children and try to settle the differences that arise in the married life of their wards. They must be consulted before the marriage can end, and in fact they perform the act that ends the marriage, i.e. one pays a nominal sum of say 2s. to the other. [586]

According to the Yao, women are quite helpless in their relationships with others, in illness or in any court cases, and must always have a man to look after them. They are seen to be as dependent on him as children are upon their parents. A statement made to me by old Naliwa, a man who has been looking after a sorority-group for years, reflects this attitude of the men towards the women in their care. 562 578 593

These dependent women (*mbumba*) are as annoying as children to look after. They are *mbumbi*¹ indeed. If a child is ill they go to tell their brother who says, 'Very well, I shall come to see the child.' If he is not very quick to do it they are likely to be backbiting. If he finds the child very ill he goes to tell the marriage sureties of its father, and they go to a diviner to look for medicine for the sick child. Then the sisters say that he is a good man because he gets on with the job when a person is ill.

Soon the child's mother becomes ill. Someone goes to tell her brother who says that he will come to see her. He visits her husband's

¹ Backbiting. See Chap. VI, pp. 137-4.

593 the identification of alternate generations; and this is particularly
 578 significant when we realize that the tension between the filial
 561 and parental generations is most likely to find expression in the
 situation where a group of young adult women wish to leave a
 village, and their mother, if she is still alive, must make up her
 mind whether to stay or to follow them.

562 The existence of rules of succession for men, different from
 613 those for women, presents an interesting analytical problem which
 561 I have not yet fully explored. Clearly men must succeed to
 positions in the first ascending generation, for they are the active
 leaders in Yao society and those who are to succeed must be
 sufficiently mature to take over the responsibilities of leadership.
 Women, on the other hand, are usually not leaders so that
 succession to positions in the second ascending generation involves
 no difficulties. A young woman may take her mother's mother's
 name without involving any responsibilities of leadership. Yet
 the interaction of the two systems of succession presumably has
 some reaction on the social structure. A man's sister's daughter
 who succeeds to her mother's mother's position becomes the
 man's mother and the man's mother's brother's sister. The man's
 own sister becomes his mother's brother's mother.¹ The effect
 of this presumably is to achieve some balance of power between
 a man and his mother's brother. By the rule of succession for
 women, a man's sister to whom he is tied by the closest possible
 ties of kinship, and on whom he is dependent for political success,
 becomes his mother's brother's mother, so forming a common
 link between two potentially opposed persons. By the same
 reasoning a man's sister's daughter who is part of his sorority-
 group and who is likely to desert her mother's mother's brother
 to go with her mother's brother if there is a conflict, by succession
 becomes the sister of her mother's brother's mother's brother, so
 forming a unifying influence within the lineage. This problem
 emerged after my fieldwork was completed so that I have no
 evidence to support these suggestions.

613 Among the men, because of the struggle for political power,
 561 the opposition of alternate generations is much stronger than
 582 among women. This emerges most clearly in the institution of
 marriage surties.

The duties of the marriage surties towards their wards are

¹ I am grateful to Prof. Gluckman who pointed this out to me.

The Lineage Framework of Villages

177

part of the normal duties of a matrilineage leader to his kinsmen.¹ But ideally each marriage is supposed to have two marriage sureties. The first, or senior, surety is called *mkokoungona*, which was described to me as 'the log that lies at the doorway'. The picture here is of a wise old man who cannot move around too easily, but who sits at the doorway of his hut ready to give advice and information to his younger kinsmen. In contrast to this is the junior surety. He is called *mkupaname* or the 'beater down of dew'. He is pictured as a young man, who is vigorous about his daily tasks and who is waiting before the dew has evaporated in the morning, at the door of couples who have difficulties. He is essentially the 'one who walks about'.

The senior marriage surety is ideally supposed to be a mother's brother, while the junior marriage surety is supposed to be a brother. In fact, while the junior marriage surety is almost always a brother, though not necessarily an elder brother, the senior, for reasons which will emerge later, is frequently not a mother's brother. However, in the Yao mind the two are fixed in the relationship to each other as mother's brother and sister's son. The fundamental conflict of their positions is expressed by the opposition of the concepts of the 'recumbent log' and the 'active man'. This view is consistent with the segmentation and internal differentiation that must go on within a lineage. As the segments of the matrilineage become progressively independent of each other, the senior relatives, who formerly held them together, become less and less active in their affairs. In Yao idiom they become 'recumbent logs'.

The relationship between mother's brother and sister's son therefore is fundamentally ambivalent. By the values surrounding the concepts of descent and relationship, a sister's son and mother's brother are close kin and bound together in their attachment to a common ancestry and to a common set of living women who are in their joint care. At the same time the mother's brother, belonging as he does to the parental generation, must be respected by his sister's sons. Recalcitrant sister's sons may be made to toe the line by a number of different sanctions. A mother's brother, for example, may take his case to an arbitrator and bring the force of public opinion to bear upon his

¹ I have described the rôles of the marriage sureties more fully in *Marriage among the Machinga Yao*.

593 economic responsibility of all the woman's children regardless
586 of whether he has begotten them or not. For example, gossips
say that a woman married my clerk so that she could have
her son initiated. The costs and fees for this boy's initiation
amounted to over a pound.

593 The other set of rights that paternal recognition confers on
602 the child are the moral rights against his paternal kinsmen. A
person may turn to his 'father's people' (*kucitati*) in times of
dire need, especially if one of them is rich. This right persists
after divorce, though the children are adult and otherwise
economically independent. For example, a woman who was
married to a labour migrant needed clothes badly. She turned
to Chiwalo her father, though he had been divorced from her
mother for more than 15 years. People in trouble often run
away to their father's village and find shelter there. A man
who wanted medicine for success in gambling asked his father
for it. Another who had broken a sexual taboo confessed to
his father who found suitable medicine for him. In each of
those relationships there was an intimate personal element.¹ A
person has the moral right to appeal to his father or paternal
kinsmen, but he has no legally enforceable right to demand help.
He has to rely on their kindness and charity. There are few
fathers who would deny their children's requests if they are
reasonable, but they can if they wish to.

• 582 The divorce rate is high among the Yao² and a typical family
586 of five uterine siblings may have three fathers. Furthermore, a
613 man should not marry into the lineage segment where his brother
has married, so that the patrilineal kinship ties of the members
of matrilineages tend to spread widely in the vicinity of the
village. The effect of this is that the members of the lineage
as a whole have widespread connections with neighbours upon
whom they may rely in times of distress. But of the individual
members of the matrilineage only a few share the same group

¹ Compare Fortes's description of uterine kinship among the Tallensi:
'[It] is essentially by a personal bond, a bond of mutual interest and concern
uniting individual to individual', *The Web of Kinship*, 37.

² Eight of every ten men and women over the age of 40 have experienced
a divorce at some time of their lives. Excluding the contingency of death
a married couple have only 30 chances in 100 of living together for 20 years.
For details, see *Marriage among the Machings Yao*.

The Patrilocally-linked Groups

187 582

of patrilineal kinsmen, so that these bonds are personal and distinctive for each member. 586 613

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORPORATE IDENTITY OF PATRILATERALLY-LINKED GROUPS

The parent-child relationship is reflected in the structural relationships of a patrilineal group to the dominant matrilineage. Children are less strongly tied to their father than to their matrilineal kinsmen. Usually when a woman dies or is divorced while living virilocally, her children return to her matrilineal village. If the children are too young to express their own wishes, their mother's brother comes for them and they are formally returned to their village of origin. Occasionally children who have grown up in their father's village, especially if they have married their cross-cousins there, refuse to move back to their matrilineal village. They prefer to remain in their father's matrilineal village where they know people more intimately. In time, as they grow older, the women have daughters who may marry uxorilocally and thus a section of a foreign matrilineage begins to develop in the village. 591 593

The village as a social unit is more closely integrated when the children who are living there with their father are still young. They do not yet form a corporate group within the village. Their affairs are supposed to be controlled by their mother's brother, but in fact the headman, who is usually their father or a paternal kinsman, may settle many of their minor difficulties and find medicine for lesser illnesses, without bothering their mother's brother. When the children become adults and begin to assert their own wills the position in the village becomes more unstable. As the daughters grow up and marry, their brothers become their junior marriage sureties. If the mother's brother lives far away, the father of the children may be the senior marriage surety. He still has a personal attachment to his children, but his sons' relationships with him may now become affected by structural elements as they tend to interact, with him and others, in certain situations as representatives of corporate groups. As the village develops a son takes over the position of senior marriage surety to the headman's wife's descendants and he becomes the senior male lineage member, while his sisters' sons begin to take over responsibilities for their sorority-groups. 593 613 621

The Yao Village

613 sections of a matrilineage, and accordingly the huts of members
 621 of the dominant matrilineage are physically separated more distinctly from the huts of members of the patrilocally-linked groups than from one another. As they develop their corporate identity the members of each matrilineage tend to build together and a little distance away from the main settlement of the other matrilineages. In Cikoja's village this tendency is seen quite plainly. There are two large patrilocally-linked groups in the village. These are the children and matrilineal descendants of Cikoja IV's second wife (represented in the plan as N), and the children and matrilineal descendants of the first wife of Maperera, the brother of Cikoja V (represented in the plan as O). These two groups are situated quite separately from the main matrilineal block of the village. The huts of X matrilineage are hidden from the view of the rest of the village and must be reached by a path. The space between huts of O matrilineage and the remainder of the matrilineal block is clear, but in it there are some large trees and the grave of Cikoja V. The huts of the three women and the one man of N matrilineage are close together in the village but scarcely distinguishable from the huts of the main matrilineage. The huts of two women of Y matrilineage are set on the extremity of the village and are not yet separated from the huts of other lineages. Note how the huts of the villagers who have married their 'cross-cousins' are placed within the village as a whole. Huts 32 and 33 belonging to the two women of X lineage have been placed between the main block of the X matrilineage and the matrilineage of Jauma (Ma₁), who is married to one of these women. Huts 10 and 11, where members of the dominant matrilineage and the patrilocally-linked lineage N have intermarried, are placed on the mutual fringe of these two groups. The three men of the patrilocally-linked lineage X who are married into the dominant lineage form a little block in the north-western corner of the village. As soon as the patrilocally-linked groups develop their identity and are able to express their autonomy, they tend to build in separate sections and to form corporate but component parts of the village.

613 One of the clearest ways in which the autonomy of the
 582 matrilineage is expressed is in the arrangements made about marriage sureties. In Cikoja's village, Cikoja himself is senior

The Patrilocally-linked Groups

191

marriage surety for only one member of the linked lineages. This is Naliwa (D39), who is the oldest surviving man in all the linked matrilineages and who is looked upon as the senior among them all. Naliwa is the senior marriage surety for most of the marriages in the linked matrilineages, but Katoli (D33) has taken over the duties for a number of his own lineage members. Table XXVIII lists the senior marriage sureties in all the

613
582

TABLE XXVIII
SENIOR MARRIAGE SURETIES IN CIKOJA VILLAGE

Surety	Rel.*	Lineage Affiliation						Total
		Mat.	Z	X	Y	N	O	
Cikoja . . .	Mat.	44	—	—	1	—	—	45
Naliwa . . .	Y	—	—	—	5	8	13	26
Katoli . . .	X	—	3	12	—	—	—	15
Mbwana . . .	X	—	1	2	—	—	—	3
Suwedi . . .	X	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Other† . . .	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Total . . .	—	45	4	15	6	8	13	91

* This is the lineage affiliation of the senior marriage surety. Cikoja is the headman and automatically senior lineage member. Naliwa is the most senior surviving member of Y lineage. Suwedi is most senior in X, followed by his younger brother Mbwana and then his sister's son Katoli.

† This is Cikoja's own marriage. His perpetual younger brother Mbande is his senior surety.

Note: There were two marriages in P lineage for which I did not record the marriage sureties.

marriages I recorded in Cikoja village. Here, age is important. The male members in the lineage of Cikoja V's wife and of Maperera's wives are all much younger than the members of Cikoja IV's wives' lineages. The descendants of Cikoja V's wife and of Maperera's wives all have junior sureties from their own lineage, but so far none has become a senior marriage surety.

As time goes on, the affairs of the linked lineage, therefore, become regulated more and more within the lineage. The headman and perpetual father recedes from the picture but is never entirely obliterated even in his relation to a linked-matrilineage which moves out to found its own village.

The Patrilocally-linked Groups

197

when I visited it in 1947.¹ The basic structure of this village is set out in Diagram 5. Here the headman² was the last surviving member of the dominant matrilineage. The founder of the village, his mother's brother, had thirteen slave concubines. Some of these were barren but others produced children to give this complex structure. In this village the 55 huts were arranged in 16 different affiliations. The details are set out in Table XXIX. These groups were held together by Mpumbe IV, old, blind and doddering as he was. The virtual leader of the village was his elder brother's son, a man in his late forties or early fifties. When Mpumbe died, late in 1948, the people said that it was because of the sorcery of his brother's son who wished to take over the name of the village. This led to a dispute, which ended in the brother's son's leaving to found a new village about 15 miles away. A distant sister's son, as I have said, succeeded to the headmanship, and the reduced village was reunited under this new leader.

However, this is an extremely unusual type of village as most villages, if they are not simple matrilineal groups, have only one patrilocally-linked group living with them. The reasons for this are firstly, that if patrilocally-linked matrilineages develop at all in the modern villages, they move out very soon after the death of their progenitor, and, secondly, that there are very few of the old slave-raiders' villages left intact.

CROSS-COUSIN AND OTHER KINDS OF INTRA-VILLAGE MARRIAGES

A most important factor in the welding of patrilocally-linked groups to the dominant matrilineage is marriage. The tradition of cross-cousin marriage is very strong among the Yao. A person may marry either type of cross-cousin but in practice preference is given to a father's sister's daughter—i.e. the woman is married to her mother's brother's son. There is a special term for cross-cousins, *asiwani*, which is used by either male or female talking to either sex. Between cross-cousins, especially cross-sexually, there is a joking-relationship which may vary all the way from ribald joking to sexual advances. Some of my male informants say that sexual intercourse may take place between cross-cousins

¹ See also Chap. VI, p. 161, and Chap. III, p. 39.

² He died late in 1948 and was succeeded by a distant 'sister's son' from the village of his perpetual son, Ngongondo.

[Text continues on p. 199]

The Patrilocally-linked Groups

199

'if the women are stupid enough to allow it'. The kinship terminology is consistent with the assumption that every man marries his cross-cousin, except that the father's sister's husband is not called 'father-in-law', but 'father'. The mother's brother's wife is called *akwegwe* (parent-in-law). The husband of a cross-cousin is called *mpwao* (younger brother), on the reasoning that if a man does not marry his cross-cousin, then his younger brother will. Dr. Meredith Sanderson told me that it was once the custom for a man to ask a prospective wife's cross-cousin before he proposed marriage because it was assumed that the woman's cross-cousin had first right to her hand. As far as I could ascertain this politeness is no longer observed.

The children of cross-cousins are called 'my children'. In addition to this a person calls his mother's mother's brother's son or mother's father's sister's son, 'father', and his mother's mother's brother's daughter or mother's father's sister's daughter, 'female father', a term which he applies also to his father's sister.

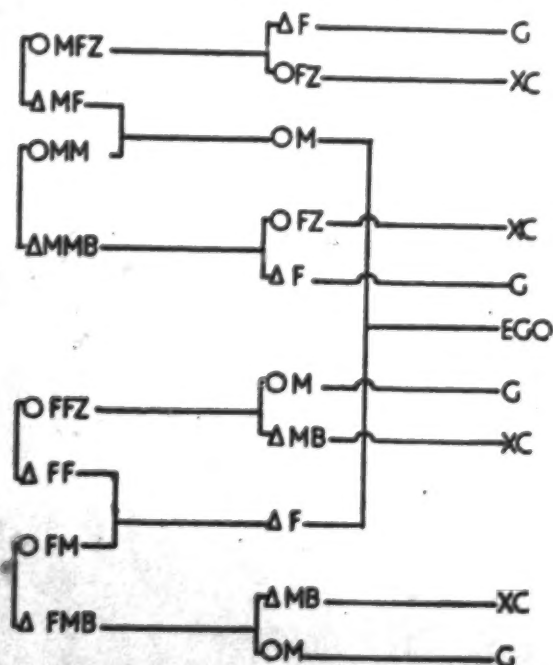


DIAGRAM 6. KINSHIP TERMS FOR PARENTS' CROSS-COUSINS.

601 A person calls his father's mother's brother's daughter and father's
 605 father's sister's daughter, 'mother'; his father's mother's brother's
 son or his father's father's sister's son, 'mother's brother'.
 Diagram 6 illustrates this. This is consistent with the assumption
 that each parent has married his cross-cousin.

582 Conversation with informants gives the impression that cross-
 cousin marriages are very common. They say, for example,
 that every man's first marriage ought to be to his cross-cousin.
 But in fact, of 103 first marriages, only 15 per cent were to real
 or classificatory cross-cousins, though 21 per cent were to other
 types of kinsmen. Marriages to other types of kinsmen are
 loosely called cross-cousin marriages, and often what has been
 called a cross-cousin marriage in conversation turns out to be
 marriage to a cross-cousin's daughter or something similar. This
 may be the reason why casual conversation leads one to imagine
 that cross-cousin marriage is so frequent.

601 But cross-cousinship is particularly significant when seen in
 605 relation to village structure. Typically, villages, if they are not
 built around a simple matrilineage, are composed of a dominant
 613 matrilineage and one or more lineages linked patrilineally to it.
 Sometimes there are groups in a village which are connected by
 a patrilineal link to a matrilineage which is in turn linked patri-
 laterally to the dominant lineage. In other words, there are some
 lineages connected by a double patrilineal link to the dominant
 lineage. But this is not common. These linked groups have
 arisen because one or more of the men of the dominant lineage
 have brought their wives to live in their village. The set of
 kinship terms applied to members of the linked lineage by
 members of the dominant lineage are shown in Diagram 7.
 We have already seen that Ego, whether man or woman, calls his
 or her mother's mother's brother's son or daughter 'father'
 or 'female father'. This usage is consistent with the assumption
 that one's mother ought to have married her mother's brother's
 son so that the mother's maternal uncle's son should be called
 'father'. On the same reasoning, one's mother's mother's
 brother's daughter should be one's father's sister and the appro-
 priate term 'female father' is accordingly applied. Because
 uxorilocal marriage is the custom, Ego's mother's mother's
 brother's son marries out of the village and his children belong
 to another lineage. The children of Ego's mother's mother's

The Patrilocally-linked Groups

203

in a joking-relationship which is more intense between men and women. Men and women in Yao public life always behave distantly to each other; hence joking-relationships are most intense between male and female cross-cousins. The joking-relationships between cross-cousins of the same sex is much more subdued and limited. The village headman himself, if he is not the actual father of the cross-cousins, is likely to be the butt of most of this. His visits to the huts of his cross-cousins to give them irksome instructions is an especial occasion for this sort of joking. Cikojia ordered his female cross-cousins to sweep a site for my tent when I first went to his village. I was most embarrassed by the insults that were hurled at his head during this procedure, but he took it all calmly and said nothing. The hostility inherent in the headman-villager relationship, together with the opposition between the dominant matrilineage and the patrilocally-linked groups, provided an opportunity *par excellence* for joking. Thus the joking between cross-cousins in the village context is a means whereby the hostility between the component groups is dissipated and the harmony within the village maintained.

The groups are, of course, welded more closely by cross-cousin marriages which are not only allowed but prescribed. By cross-cousin marriage a man from one of the component groups of the village may marry and yet not leave the village. He may in fact have to build a hut in another part of the village, but this is obviously not the separation that uxorilocal marriage entails. At the same time, in a village where the headmen have married their cross-cousins, there will be fewer patrilocally-linked groups, so that the village will be less complex and consequently less liable to internal dissension. If cross-cousin marriages were not practised, and if the children of the headmen and senior members of the linked lineages did not return to their matrilineal villages on the death of one of their parents, the intra-village situation could in time become extremely complex. Assuming that each linked group had at least one male member married virilocally, the number of related groups would double itself in each generation.¹ However, because of limiting economic factors I describe later and the disruptive social processes within villages, this situation never occurs in practice, and Yao villages on the whole remain relatively simple in structure.

¹ See detailed argument and diagram in *Seven Tribes*, 333.

585 drum of her married life begins. The man and woman live together peaceably enough as
 462 a rule, each attending to his own sphere of work. The man builds the house, the woman
 made the floor; she sweeps and cooks, she is the hewer of wood and drawer of water. The
 man hunts, fishes, makes mats, baskets, the grain store, game traps, and bark-cloth; he
 looks after the tobacco, and makes the snuff, while his wife brews the beer. He it is who
 fashions the gourd yamels and carves the spoons, while the woman is the potter (Pl. III, 4)
 and pipe-maker. Together they hoe and together they harvest, but to the woman falls the
 monotonous drudgery of pounding and sifting the corn for flour.

842 The Yao have a custom like that of the Anyanja. A sister brings to the house of the
 newly wedded pair a log of green wood from a *mbanga* tree which is very hard; the log
 [522] may be two feet in diameter and four feet long. Should the bride not become pregnant
 before it is burned away, the husband is laughed at and they may both be teased by having
 [558] many logs brought to the house. A man who has no children is much despised and there
 is a saying, "He must have eaten some ground-nuts," punning on the word for a thick-
 [837] skinned variety of ground-nut, *chimbuwila*, a word which also means sterility. An impotent
 man may, with the consent of his wife, introduce some male friend into the house, any
 children born in consequence being claimed as the husband's. He usually chooses some
 friend from a distance to obviate any attachment springing up between him and the wife.
 Two married couples may, all consenting, exchange consorts for the night, but they never
 live together like this for long periods.

● 582 There is one well-defined marriage taboo; a man may not marry a woman of his own
 clan. In the old days, he was also restricted to his own tribe, except in the case of slave
 [611] wives and wives by capture. Since the clan is inherited from the mother,¹ a man may not
 marry the daughters of his maternal aunts, but he may marry his other female cousins.
 [587] He may not marry two sisters nor a deceased wife's sister; neither do two brothers marry
 two sisters.

595 The number of wives is limited only by the husband's ability to provide for them. In
 addition to free wives, a man might formerly have a number of slave wives. The head wife
 is called *kusyeto*, the other wives, *mungumba*. The word given by Maedonald, *akusyeto*,²
 meaning the junior wives, is a Chinyanja word and, I think, wrongly applied.

582 It has been said that a man always marries into the village of his wife. For this reason,
 [442] female children are always prized as it means an increase in the number of able-bodied
 men added to the village. In rare cases, the wife might be taken to the husband's village,
 [583] as is the Anyanja practice.³ This, of course, is true in the case of chiefs and headmen. Here,
 we may also note that no payment is made for the wife and no dowry is received with her.

584 To revert to betrothal, occasionally the sponsors will not agree to the marriage and a
 843 runaway match takes place, but in the end, the marriage is usually regularised by the
 sponsors coming to an agreement. If, however, the woman has in the meantime become

¹ Vide infra, p. 134.² Op. cit., p. 134.³ Stannus, op. cit., p. 208.

567 Slavery. Slaves were acquired by capture or purchase, or were received as payment. Prisoners taken by the vassals of one chief in a fight with the partisans of another chief became slaves. Slave raids were also made by the Wayao upon the weaker Anyanja or again expeditions were sent out hundreds of miles away into the Chipeta country to buy slaves.

[422] Slaves were a man's goods and chattels, to do with mainly as he pleased, but no man might kill a slave without bringing the case before his chief and obtaining consent. While some were bought and sold and sometimes found their way into a slave caravan bound for the coast, many, perhaps the majority, lived the life of ordinary individuals in the village. A man who was unhappy in a village and wished to escape from his vassalage might run away to another village and there commit some act so that he might be claimed as a slave. The custom was to go to the village and sit by the site of a house which had been pulled down after the death of the occupant, and the saying is, "He has been called by the dead man's spirit."

[554] Many a slave has become an important man in the village and slaves were often the trusted advisers of their chiefs, but there was no means of becoming a freeman. Neither a slave himself nor a second party could purchase his freedom. A slave capturing another man in warfare, for instance, could not ask for his own freedom in exchange for his captive, but anyone so taken became, in a way, the slave of a slave, and the master could not sell the second slave without the permission of the slave captor. An old slave might often be allowed to do just as he pleased and to all intents and purposes was a free man, but he was never actually freed. A slave might earn a return for work done for others than his master; part of this he would probably give to his master, but there was no regular tax upon such earnings.

• [582] The idea in accumulating slaves seems to have been to increase the population of the villages and hence their power and progeny. This is borne out by the fact that marriage between free men and slaves was allowed. Marriage between a free man and a slave woman was unaccompanied by any ceremony and was therefore rather in the nature of recognized concubinage. Such a wife, if unsatisfactory, could be sold out of the village, but generally she was well treated. The children of two slaves were of course born into slavery; the children of a slave woman by a freeman husband, were not quite emancipated, as the father could not remove the child from the village of the slave mother's master, and in very extreme cases, it might be sold by him.

[421] Women might marry slave husbands and often a master married his daughters to his slave men whom he thought well of. This amounted to a guarantee to the slave that he would never be parted with. A woman with a slave husband could not leave him informally; she could not sell him, inasmuch as women have no property.

418
423 Land Ownership. The ownership of all land was vested in the chief, but he appeared to hold it in surety for all the people over which he ruled. Headmen had no land rights.

593 The children of maternal uncles (C 6 and 8) and of paternal aunts (C 2 and 4) are
601 called *cousins akhimsim* (sing. *akhimsim*), and, conversely, the children of maternal aunts
(C 7 and 9) and of paternal uncles (C 1 and 3) are called "brothers and sisters"; one
would address the other as "*akhimsim*" or "*akhimsim*," but either is male to the
other.

601 It is interesting, therefore, to note that cousinship is of two kinds: the relationship
605 between a child and his maternal aunts' children or his paternal uncles' children is *weak*,
whereas the relationship with his maternal uncles' children or his paternal aunts' children
is *strong*.

[611] It is easily understood why the maternal aunts' children are considered as brothers and
sisters, as among the Yao, matrilineal descent is the rule, the children taking the clan of

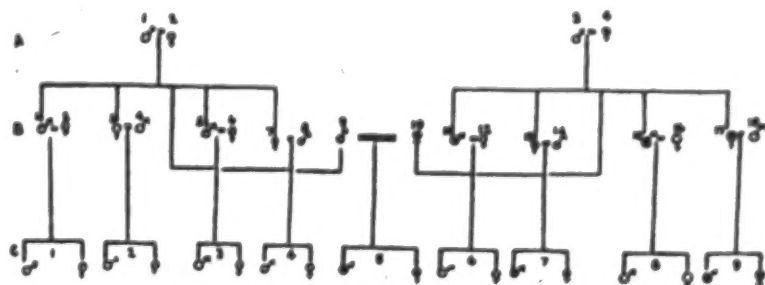


FIGURE 1

the mother. In the diagram, this is indicated in black. That the paternal uncles' children
bear the same relationship would seem to indicate that matrilineal descent is not absolute
but that dual descent from both parents is recognized.

[582] Children C 5 may not marry C 7 and 9, nor C 1 and 3. In the case of the former, this
is because persons of the same clan may not marry, but in the case of the latter, no such
reason is given but they are simply said to be brothers and sisters. Children C 5 may
marry their cousins C 6 and 8 and C 2 and 4, but this is not very common as it is said such
marriages are always unhappy.

601 The wife of a maternal uncle (B 12) speaks of her nephew by marriage (C 5) as *nauna*,
604 husband, because, in the event of her husband's death, this nephew would inherit from
him and he might marry the widow.

601 A parent-in-law or child-in-law is called *nauna* indifferently. Paternal and maternal
grand-parents, and great-uncles and aunts are all called *nauna*; a grand-child, *chikubala*.

The words *staf* and *ama* commonly mean father and mother, but, as given above, there
are other words for these two parents, whereas *staf* and *ama* are applied to certain aunts

THE VILLAGE HEADMAN IN BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

91

ship. The difficulties of his position are brought home to the neophyte village headman in speeches made by old and experienced men. On one such occasion I heard a man say, 'Some men who marry into a village are bad and can split a village like this one by telling lies to the headman, saying that his sisters are talking behind his back and are insulting him. When a headman hears all this he might break his village by ill-treating his relatives, thus causing himself to be left all alone.' In this way the headman's responsibility for maintaining harmonious relations between the members of the village and himself is emphasized. His failure to do so results in what they call a break in the village—the departure of some of the members to live elsewhere—which is a severe blow to the status of the headman. In fact, he is dependent on his dependants for status, and the Yao are quick to point this out to neophyte headmen, saying, 'A tree cannot grow without branches.'

We can better understand the situation if we consider the social structure of the Yao village a little more closely. The Yao are a matrilineal people and are dominantly matrilineal. They live in small groups of huts scattered fairly evenly over the country and from a few hundred yards to possibly a mile or so apart. Such clusters may contain as few as five or as many as sixty or more huts, occupied by between 20 and 100 people.

These people are almost always kinsfolk, and in the smaller villages they are usually all either matrilineal descendants of a common ancestress or their spouses. In the larger groups there is a more complex situation which I shall analyse below. In the simpler groups there may be no male matrilineal descendant in the village and the leadership of the group is taken over by a senior female descendant of the founder of the village. Usually, however, if the group is large, one of the male matrilineal descendants lives patrilocally in the village and assumes leadership.

The relationship between a male matrilineal descendant and the female matrilineal descendants who are in his charge is signified by the word '*mbumba*'. The word particularly refers to the relationship between a man and his sisters and I have therefore translated it as 'sorority-group'. It includes a man's full sisters, matrilineal female collaterals (whom he calls sisters), their female children, and the female children of those female children, and so on. It is usually used in the sense of 'somebody's sorority-group'. A man belonging to the descent-group of the sorority-group may refer to these women as 'our sorority-group'. The man who is in charge of the sorority-group is referred to as the *ayaw mbumba*. This could be translated as 'owner of the sorority-group' but because of the property associations with the word 'owner' in our language, I have instead translated this as 'warden of the sorority-group' which expresses more accurately the relationship between a man and his female relatives. Even in those groups where there is a female in charge of the village and no male matrilineal descendant is resident in the group, there is usually some one man, possibly married in some other village, who is warden of the sorority-group. The warden of a sorority-group has certain precise duties to perform on behalf of his charges. First, he is concerned with the good relations between members of the sorority-group and with other such groups. He has to settle most of the domestic quarrels that take place between members of the sorority-groups. Second, and this is considered to be a most important function, he is the person who is the

622
554
578361
621621
612612
592
601612
592
582
622

THE VILLAGE HEADMAN IN BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

622 marriage-surety for the marriages of the members of the group. Briefly this means that he must be approached before a marriage can be legally contracted by any member of his charge, he or his representative is present at the ceremony which formally announces the marriage, and he is responsible for the behaviour of his female relative in that marriage. Third, he is immediately concerned with the physical welfare and health of his sorority-group. He must track down the sorcerers causing their illnesses and supply the medicine to heal them. He has to arrange for the ritual purification of mourners after the death of one of the sorority-group's members. Fourth, he must be present in the court-house if one of his charges is involved in a case and he is usually looked to for the money for the fine. I have known a case not to begin because the warden of the sorority-group was not present. Frequently if the husbands of the female members of his charge default, he has to provide the hut-tax money.

612 Usually the warden of the sorority-group is the eldest brother of a group of adult full sisters. The younger brothers of the group of sisters, while concerned with their welfare, do not stand in this particular responsible position. They refer to the sorority-group as 'our sorority-group'. The elder brother refers to the sorority-group, be it noted, as 'my sorority-group', and this sets him over and against his younger brothers. The position that the warden holds, however, is not rigidly fixed, 622 for a younger brother may assume control of the sorority-group if for some reason he is dissatisfied with the way in which affairs are being conducted, and is able so to assert himself.

593 If we recall that the status of a man in a Yao community is determined by the number of dependants that he can command, it is easy to see that relationships between an elder brother and his younger brother are distinctive. The elder brother is responsible for the actions of his younger brother in much the same way as he is for one of his sorority-group, and the younger brothers have a great emotional attachment to their older brothers. Yet at the same time the elder brother stands in the way of the 612 younger brother in his striving for status, in that while the elder brother is warden of the sorority-group the younger brother cannot be, and therefore cannot have dependants and status. It is not surprising to find that accusations of sorcery are frequently made between brothers and the result often is that the younger brother takes the sorority-group away from his sorcerer brother to some other place and sets up a new village with it. Therefore, one possible source of instability in a Yao village lies in the operation of the kinship system in a system of values which reckons status by adherents.

622 I have thus far been describing the simpler types of village. In the larger groups it is common for the warden of the sorority-group to live in the village where his sorority-group is. Then he usually brings one (or sometimes more) of his wives to the village, where she lives patrilocally. The daughters that are born to her do not return to the sorority-group from which the headman's wife came but marry and set up households near their mother in the village of their father. Thus there develops 613 in time a second sorority-group in the village, alongside the first sorority-group, and related to it through the headman. At this point we may say that the man's position 621 has changed from that of headman of a village containing a single sorority-group, to the more complicated and less secure one of village headman over a more hetero-

296 AN ESTIMATE OF FERTILITY IN SOME YAO HAMLETS IN

- impressed on people's memories and remembered by most of the people. Thus it was desirable to find a useful reference date between 1930 and 1940. It might be thought that the death of King George V would be memorable. However, though all who were old enough at the time could remember the witchfinders, only a few could remember the death of King George.
- This skeleton chronology was filled in by events of more local significance. For example, Kawinga's brick house was built in 1929, the present Nyambi succeeded in 1933, &c. In addition, in particular hamlets there were men who had been in the Army, or had been to work in South Africa or Southern Rhodesia. Usually they could recall the date of going and sometimes of return, though they may have lost count of the intervening years. Such dates were often useful points. A small minority had actually recorded the dates of birth and death of children.
- In addition to this, it was possible to fix the ages of the young children by reference to harvests, since the Yao reckon two years in retrospect, 'last year' meaning before the last harvest and 'the year before last' meaning the period before the harvest before last. Before the year before last, all time is merely *kala-kala*, the only indication of the period being the pitch of the voice in which it is said or the presence or absence of an exclamatory 'E!' before speaking.
- Particular care was taken to secure the ages of women and the dates at which they had borne children. There was, as mentioned above, some reticence in mentioning the names of dead children, but this was usually met successfully by questioning the women's male relatives who were generally more communicative on these points.
- In spite of the care taken to obtain this information, it was impossible to fix the ages of six women in the sample, and they have been excluded from the major part of the analysis. In addition, there were thirty-nine men who were not available for questioning. These were all adults, the husbands of women in the hamlets. The Yao are matrilineal and matrilocal, and men tend to spend much of their time away from the hamlet of their relatives-in-law. Since they are in many ways strangers in the hamlets no information could be obtained about them.

2. THE GENERAL BACKGROUND TO FERTILITY

All the hamlets visited were occupied by members of the Yao tribe. The Yao are an Islamized people who achieved the questionable distinction of being efficient slave raiders at the end of the nineteenth century. They are a matrilineal and predominantly matrilocal people living in hamlets of from about 5 to 100 huts or more.

TABLE I. Age of Women at First Marriage

Percent of women	Age of women at first marriage											Total	Median age at first marriage
	7-10	11-14	15-17	17-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	Over 50		
Under 30	3	6	3	18	9	4	1	3	..	..	..	33	16.7
30-45	4	6	7	11	4	4	2	3	..	..	3	43	16.3
Over 45	..	2	1	1	8	3	1	8	..	1	..	23	18.4
Total	7	14	11	30	21	11	2	8	..	2	3	121	17.0

LIWONDE DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN NYASALAND

197

They are semi-subsistence cultivators who own no cattle and whose diet is therefore largely vegetation, viz. sorghum and maize-meal with ground-nuts and beans and certain leaves together with a small quantity of cassava roots. 105

Marriages are contracted early in life with little difficulty and ceremony. Formerly girls were espoused as mere children, and this still happens, but whether the custom is falling away or not I could not check quantitatively because the memories of the old women who had been married as children forty or fifty years ago could not be relied upon. Table I shows the ages at first marriage for a sample of 121 married women for whom this information was available. 582

Where marriage takes place so early we can expect that the mean age when child-bearing commences will also be early. Table II shows the median age of mothers at the birth of their first child. 163

TABLE II. *Age of Mother at Birth of First child*

Present age-group of mothers	Age of mother at birth of first child									Median age at birth of first child
	12½-15	15-17	17½-20	20-22	22½-25	25-27	27½-30	30-32	Over 32½	
Under 20	9	26	12	17	6	4	..	..	..	74
20-25	10	24	10	9	4	7	3	4	3	66
Over 25	3	7	9	9	3	6	1	3	1	46
Total	22	47	31	35	13	17	6	7	4	136

From these two tables it is clear that nearly all women in the community are married early and that child-bearing commences very soon after marriage.

Table III shows the conjugal status of all women over the age of 15. 162

TABLE III. *Conjugal Status of all Women over the Age of 15*

Present age-group	Never married	Wives of			Divorced	Widows	Total
		Monogynists	Polygynists	Labour migrants			
Under 20	23	13	3	4	..	..	43
20-25	3	27	18	9	9	3	79
25-30	2	21	19	3	9	3	70
Over 30	..	14	10	1	11	16	42
Total	27	55	30	17	29	22	151

Here we see that of all women under 45 (194), 141 (73 per cent.) are married, though only 83 (43 per cent.), i.e. the wives of monogynists, have their husbands living permanently with them. Another 40 (20 per cent.) were married to men who were married to other wives, so that while their husbands were not living with them permanently they were nevertheless with them periodically. Eighteen other women (9 per cent.) were married to men who had left to work outside the area and hence were not living with their wives at all at the time of the survey. Visits by men to places of work outside the area may last a year or more. It should

101 Amosings in the Makanjila area of Fort John-
 619 ston District, i.e. to the east of the south end of
 175 the Lake near Fort Maguire. These two divisions
 643 are insignificant when compared with the other
 two divisions in Nyasaland. The third division
 is the Mangoch Yao now settled around Blantyre,
 while the last division, the Macings, are settled
 between Fort Johnston district and Zomba.
 These divisions arose from a breaking up of the
 Yao tribe which originally occupied the territory
 between the Rovuma and Lajenda Rivers in what
 is now Portuguese East Africa. These divisions
 are not very significant to-day. Members of a
 division recognise that they are more closely
 related to each other than to the members of
 another division, but this does not appear to
 affect modern political life in any way.

619 The first Kawinga, Liwonde and Nikata
 175 all belonged to the Macings division which had
 551 settled near the tip of Lake Amaramba where it
 643 empties into the Lajenda River. From this place
 of origin, the groups associated with these early
 leaders moved into Nyasaland. In addition to
 belonging to the same division of the Yao tribe
 the three leaders mentioned also had the same clan-
 name, viz. *amhona*.^{*} The term that I have trans-
 lated as clan-name is the Yao word *ahonyo*,
 which may also be translated as "kind" or "sort".
 Thus, if one asks a man the "kind" or "sort"
 of Yao he is, his answer may refer to the major
 divisions as above, i.e. Macings or Mangoch
 or it may refer to the clan-name. Clan-names are
 inherited matrilineally, but holders of the same
 name are unable to trace their descent from
 a common ancestor. People with the same clan-
 names formerly did not marry but this prohibi-
 tion has fallen away. For the commoners the
 clan-name seems to have lost most of its signifi-
 cance but it is carefully remembered in the royal
 lines and lines in which the rank of a village head-
 man is passed down.

443 The present Kawinga and the present Liwonde
 551 can trace their descent matrilineally from a com-
 175

584
 582
 7
 (582)
 7
 601
 7
 605
 7
 (587)

be gone through soon. Betrothal, however, is a gradual process, whose culminating ceremony cannot take place until the marriage has been consummated. Ancient custom here varied, but it seems that the majority of Nyanja and Yao girls married after puberty, and to young men not very much their senior. Meanwhile, Abena calls all her boy cousins "brother-in-law", (*alamu*); she may call any one of them jokingly "my husband", (*amananga*), and he retaliates with "my wife", (*akamanga*). There exists between them, in fact, a relationship similar to that found in many Bantu tribes and translated as "a joking relationship". The Nyanja call it *chibale chibalekhalo*, which means literally "relationship of rudeness, vulgar familiarity, or swearing". It permits these cousins to call each other "Thou", (*ine*), seldom heard even between brothers and sisters, to use great freedom of speech and mock insolence to one another, and to indulge in horse-play together. Just how far this familiarity went in the old days, and still goes among pagans, it is impossible to discover; children, certainly, were accustomed to build grass houses together and play at families, (*kupanga masenje*), and a Nyanja writer on the subject of Bantu marriage believes that this involved a good deal of sexual play, and not necessarily only between betrothed cousins.

7
 (60)

Abena also calls her girl cousins *alamu* or *amama*, and is on very familiar terms with them; custom, indeed, seems to encourage a lack of respect between them, for Abena knows that if she does in time marry one of her boy cousins, his sisters will then feel entitled to walk into her hut and make free with her belongings, and expect her to do the same by them. Now they share with her their sleeping-mats in their grandparents' hut, together with their younger brothers. Other anansi of Abena, children of her father's classifi-

ⁿ
614
(582)
ⁿ
(602)
(609)
(mwale, or among the Ngoni and the Nyanja influenced by them, mwale),—say the Mwales'. His father is of another clan—as likely as not the Milanzi—for it is considered incest for two Mwales to marry. He will tell you that he addresses every Mwale he meets, even a stranger from a far village, as "brother, sister, father, mother", (achimwene, chemwali, atate, amai) according to age and sex, and feels obliged to offer them help and hospitality—although this feeling is in most parts dying out. The Milanzi of his own generation whom he meets he considers in the same way as his cousins, (asuwani), and treats, or used to treat, with the same friendly familiarity as his real cross-cousins at his father's home village.

ⁿ
174
614
(602)
ⁿ
(582)
ⁿ
(173)
ⁿ
177
601
582
614
This extension of brotherhood to one's mother's, and cousinship to one's father's, whole clan, suggests that the Nyanja clans (into which possibly the Yao married) may have grown each out of an extended family group, (mwale), living or travelling together. Cross-cousin marriage would follow naturally on friendship between two such nearby groups, for after a few generations of intermarriage the groups would become so connected that a man born into the one and marrying into the other would in actuality be marrying his cross-cousin. Moreover there is a tradition, at least among the Nyanja of Zomba District, which bears out the evidence of the relationship terms. Old people tell how the earliest leaders of their tribe entered the country, each surrounded by his mwale, and settled first here then there; they explain how each group came to be named, and how lasting friendship arose between the Amwale under Chief Mpoto and the Milanzi under Chief Saima, and similarly between the Apiri and the Ankhom, the Ambwe and the Achanza. Whatever truth lies behind this tradition, it is certain that to-day, however scattered the clans may be and however generally the young men reject cross-cousin marriage, yet a Mwale still calls "cousin" every Milanzi he meets and treats their women as potential mates; and the same holds good between the Phiri and Nkhoma, Mbewe and Chanza clans.

601

In Table II, the relationships mentioned in Column 1 are defined in Columns 2-5.

Thus a brother (of (a)) is, *inter alia*, the son of (a)'s father's brother (Column 3), the husband of the daughter of (a)'s father's sister (Column 4), and so on (see Table II).

Before the tables can be fully intelligible, however, a brief explanation of terms having no English equivalent is necessary:—

(a) *Akwepe* and *Akweu* are terms exclusively given to relations by marriage.

Akweu is a brother or sister by marriage—it is not advisable to use the terms "brother-in-law" or "sister-in-law" as they are too circumscribed.

Akwepe has not even an approximate equivalent in English owing to the diversity of relationships included (e.g., wife's mother and great-granddaughter's husband).

Meideni is a special term given to the children of a paternal aunt or maternal uncle, to distinguish them from those of a paternal uncle or maternal aunt.

[582]

Meideni are not only allowed to marry but are encouraged to do so.

Akwelane is used only for a maternal uncle, and *chipeu* is the reciprocal term for a sister's son.

The use of inverted commas with English terms (e.g., "brother") indicates that the person is regarded by the Yao as being of the same relation to him as the term usually signifies in English. Thus a Yao regards the son of his maternal aunt, for instance, as being exactly the same relation as his own brother (by the same parents); this relationship is indicated as "brother."

601
488

Succession. The common rule of discriminating between the children of a brother and sister and those of two brothers or of two sisters is present here, and is combined with the equally common one of succession to the sister's son.

The rule of succession is, strictly speaking, to the eldest son of the eldest sister. If, however, a man and his advisers consider him to be unsuitable, or in event of his death, the succession passes to the following in order of precedence: younger son of the eldest sister, younger son of a younger sister, and son of own daughter.

Only by general consent can the succession pass elsewhere, but it not infrequently happens that intrigue procures the death of all the legal heirs of a wealthy or powerful man. In such cases, but only by general consent, the succession may pass to a brother (by the same mother), any "son," or even to a powerful vassal; it is often felt that a wealthy or influential man is likely to conduce to the peace and welfare of the country rather as the chief, than as a probably turbulent vassal of a man whose succession is apt to be controversial. On the death of such a man, however, matters are often in a state of chaos owing to the multitude of claimants, the members of the two families; I have known two such cases. A man, also, who

[TEXT CONTINUES ON PAGE 374--ANALYST]

601 knows that he is not legally justified in "entering into the name" is loath to do
428 as, as he knows that he is not expected to make a successful chief. The defeat of
Salimu, the fifth Mekanjila, by the British in 1893 was, and still is, ascribed to the
fact that he belonged to the male line.

The term *chipesa* (*muwipwagwao*, "his *chipesa*") may be used for any child of a
sister. A female title (common amongst the Yao) descends to the eldest daughter
of the eldest son of the bearer of the title.

582
601 *Marriage.*—Relatives who are forbidden to marry are called *achidawoko*; they
include all those given in the table except *asidasi*, *achisankulu* ("grandchildren"),
and the wife of the maternal uncle. An heir, on succeeding, may marry the wife or
[587] wives of his maternal uncle, but not if he has previously married one of his daughters.

It is legal, though rare, for a man to marry the daughter of his own child
(*chisukulu*).

614
601 "*Brothers*" and "*Sisters*."—The term *ulongo* is used to describe an exogamous
clan, and the members are known as *mlongo* (singular)—*achalongo* or *da chilongo*,
collectively. This word *mlongo* is probably a corruption of *mu ulongo* ("in the clan")
as it requires the use of the term *mjakwe* (*ajno*) "a companion," instead of the
possessive pronoun. Thus *mlongo mjakwe* (*achilongo ajno*), "his (their) clan
relatives" (instead of *mlongo jwakwe*, *achalongo wao*).

601 There is no general term corresponding to the English "brother." The nearest
is *alumbu*, which describes the relationship between a "brother" and a "sister,"
it is rarely used by women, however.

The elder "brother" of a man is called *akulu* or *achimwene*. These terms
are used for all sons of a father's elder "brother" or of a mother's elder "sister,"
and for the elder brother by the same parents. They are also used by a woman
for any "brothers," older or younger, senior or junior, in preference to the term
alumbu.

Mpwanga is used for a son of a father's younger "brother" or of a mother's
younger "sister," and for a younger brother by the same parents. It is used by
a woman for her "sisters" in exactly the same way, but is never used by a woman
of a man.

A man calls his "sister" *akmwali*, collectively, *wawinjwa akmwali*; a girl
refers to an elder, or senior "sister," by means of the same term; a man refers to a
"sister" as *alumbuwangu* or as *akmwali*.

The term *chisukulu* is used for a "grandchild" (*mwisukuluwangu*, "my 'grand-
child'").

"*Father*" and "*Mother*."—A paternal aunt is distinguished as *atati wakongwe*
("female father") if necessary, though she is, of course, not addressed as such.
The elder brother of a father is referred to as *atati wakulungu* ("the great father"),
his younger brother as *atati wumandi* ("the little father"). Other *achatati* are
similarly distinguished.